

What Is The *BE-SAFE* Program?

It is a program within the Domestic Violence Bureau of the Erie County District Attorney's Office. The program is staffed by trained attorneys, Social Workers, and investigators. Whether you have a case in Criminal Court or simply want to discuss your options and learn about domestic violence, BE SAFE Social Workers provide many services:

Advocates are available to provide **CONFIDENTIAL** services such as:

- Safety planning and risk assessment.
- Supportive counseling.
- Referrals/linkage to other services such as housing, shelter, long-term counseling.
- Assistance with NYS Crime Victim's Board applications for financial reimbursement.

Specialized Services:

BE SAFE Advocates are the *leading* source of information and referral about the criminal court process by providing:

- court advocacy and accompaniment.
- direct linkage to the District Attorneys.

Is Your Partner Abusive?

A checklist of signs & cues:

- √ Pressures you for a relationship early on.
- √ Jealous or Possessive
- √ Controlling or Hypersensitive
- √ Verbally abusive- calls you names or puts you down.
- √ Blames others for his/her problems or mistakes.
- √ Doesn't take responsibility for his/her actions.
- √ Attempts to isolate you from friends and family.
- √ Threatens you with violence if things don't go his/her way.
- √ Controls your money, spending, or access to bank accounts.
- √ Stalks, follows you, violates your order of protection.
- √ Destroys your property.
- √ Minimizes or denies his/her actions
- √ "Playful" use of force during sex
- √ Forces you to have sex when you don't want to.
- √ Uses the children against you. Uses them to relay messages or threatens to keep them from you.
- √ You feel like you're "walking on eggshells" around your partner. Nothing is ever good enough.
- √ Physically hurts you: pushes, slaps, chokes, punches, holds you against your will, uses weapons or threatens to use them, grabs your hair, kicks.
- √ Becomes aggressive with the use of alcohol or drugs.

What if I have a Domestic Violence case in Criminal Court?

If an arrest was made against your partner, spouse or family member then you may find yourself in criminal court. Steps in the court process include:

- Arraignment - the Judge may issue a *No Contact Order of Protection* and can set bail or release your partner / family member.
- The DA's Office will speak with you in person or by phone to obtain information about the case.
- Social Workers will help you plan for your safety and advocate for you in court.
- You may receive a notice or subpoena to appear in court for upcoming proceedings.

Can the charges be dropped?

The District Attorney has a NO DROP policy for domestic violence cases due to the serious nature of these crimes. This policy takes the pressure off of individuals who are threatened to "drop" the charges; therefore it is **not** possible to drop the case.

The DA's Office will work with you on your case to decide the best outcome. Depending on the seriousness of the offense(s), this can include:

- counseling (Batterer's Program, Alcohol/Drug, Mental Health)
- probation
- jail



Orders of Protection

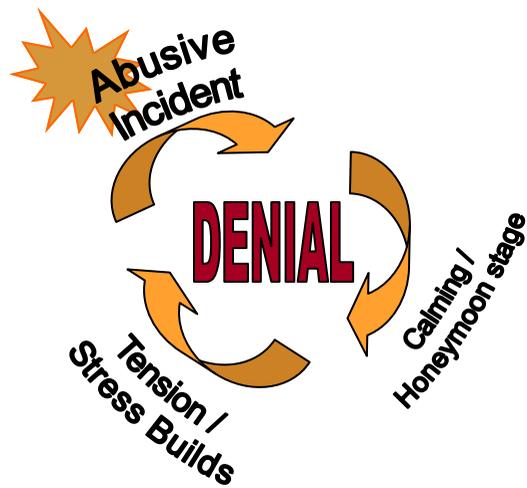
There are two different kinds of Orders:

No Contact-your partner must stay 100 feet away and cannot call, email or write to you.

No-Offensive Contact- you and your partner can have contact but he/she must refrain from any offensive, harassing behavior.

- The Judge can issue a NO CONTACT order at the beginning of your case without your presence or permission.
- The DA's Office CANNOT change your order.
- Your partner may have to prove to the Judge that he/she has enrolled in or completed counseling, or has met other conditions.
- Call the Police if your order has been violated.
- If you have a warrant card and want to file charges, go to the Family Justice Center at 237 Main St. 14th floor, Buffalo, NY.

Cycle of Violence



Many times we don't realize we're in an abusive relationship because it doesn't happen frequently. Usually an incident occurs and there is a Calming Stage when your partner may apologize and promise to never hurt you again. But stress and tension build up over time leading to another abusive incident (which is not always physical). This cycle takes years to break and is difficult to recognize while in the relationship.

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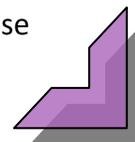
How Does Domestic Violence Effect Children?

Children watch and learn from their parents and their environment.

Children may get hurt attempting to intervene in a dispute or while trying to protect a parent.

Children may feel the abuse is their fault and can feel guilt, shame & anger.

It is considered neglectful for children to stay in a home where domestic abuse occurs.



Important Numbers

24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotlines for Erie County-

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|---|--|
| | 862-HELP(4357) (shelter) 884-6000 |
| Family Justice Center | 558-7233 |
| Haven House | 884-6000 |
| Crisis Services | 834-3131 |
| Hispanics United of Buffalo | 856-7110 |
| International Institute of Bflo | 883-1900 |
| Child Advocacy Center | 886-5437 |
| Buffalo Police-Domestic Violence squad | 851-4494 |
| Holding Center-Inmate Release Information | 858-2174 |
| Erie County DA-Victim Witness Program | 858-2400 |
| Family Court Advocacy | 845-2751 |
| IDV Court Advocacy | 845-9384 |
| Child Abuse Hotline | 1-800-342-3720 |
| VINE NY | 1-888-846-3469 |
| -to register for victim notification regarding offenders in the NY State prison system. | |

Buffalo and Erie County
Stopping Abuse in the
Family Environment



BE-SAFE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BUREAU

ERIE COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Frank A. Sedita, III – District Attorney

Office: (716) 858-4630

Call our Social Workers
and Advocates for help.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Located at: Buffalo City Court
4th floor – Domestic Violence Bureau
50 Delaware Avenue Buffalo, NY 14202